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Chairman Istook Praises Major Step To Lower Crime in Washington, D. C.

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), Chairman of the District of Columbia Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, praised testimony given today about a major plan to reduce crime in Washington, D. C.

The plan will require universal drug testing of convicted criminals while they are free on probation, and who have drug abuse histories. Testimony to the subcommittee today projected that the testing program in its first year will result in parole revocations for 3-4,000 convicted offenders who remain habitual drug users. It was testified that such offenders each commit up to 500 crimes a year because of their continuing drug habits, crimes which typically go unreported.

"Washington deserves safer streets, safer schools and safer neighborhoods," Istook said. **"This will help dramatically to clear many of these folks off the streets, because their probation violation is far quicker, easier and surer than having to prove in court all the new crimes they commit. It also helps those who have a chance at rehabilitation, because they know they'll be monitored and must stay clean in order to stay free. We have drug rehab programs to help them, but they have to be willing to help themselves, too."**

Istook noted that the program will be a vital part of Congress' legislation regarding the District this year. He stressed, **"Tax cuts for everyone and economic development on every corner won't help Washington one bit unless we also make it a better place to live, with safer streets, safer schools and safer neighborhoods."**

The testimony was given to the subcommittee by John A. Carver, III. Carver is the trustee who runs the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency that oversees those on probation and parole in the District. Carver testified that the program his agency proposes will be the most ambitious in the country. He said it's needed because a huge number of District crimes are committed by repeat offenders while they're on probation and who continue to abuse drugs. Carver said the universal testing will apply to 20,000 of the 30,000 convicted offenders his agency now supervises. It will increase the number of annual drug tests given by his agency from about 150,000 now to 750-900,00 per year under the expanded testing. The increased cost, he projects, will be \$3.8-million per year.

